

Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure

Report and Position

Skin Closure

Guidelines of care for Simple Closures, Layered Closures, Complex Closures, Flaps, and Grafts

I. Introduction

The development of guidelines will promote the continued delivery of quality care for physicians delivering dermatology care and assist those outside our profession in understanding the complexities and scope of care.

II. Definition

Surgical closures of the skin are used to repair skin defects to restore skin continuity while preserving function and aesthetics.

A. Simple closures

May be delegated to certified or licensed non-physician in compliance with appropriate statutes and regulations.

B. Layered closure

May be delegated to certified or licensed non-physician in compliance with appropriate statutes and regulations.

C. Complex closures

Repair of wounds requiring more than layered closure involving scar revision, debriedment, extensive undermining, stent or retention sutures

A physician may **not** delegate to certified or licensed non-physician because of the complexity involved in repair of skin defects to restore skin continuity while preserving function and aesthetics.

D. Skin flaps

Adjacent tissue transfers or rearrangements consisting of skin and subcutaneous tissue that is moved from one part of the body to another. A vascular attachment is maintained for nourishment.

1. Skin flaps are designed in either an axial pattern in which they include a larger, usually named, subcutaneous artery, or in a random pattern in which the blood supply is derived entirely from the subdermal plexus. Because of its superior blood supply, the axial flap may be significantly longer in length than the random flap.

2. Skin flaps may include muscle (myocutaneous flap), cartilage, and/or hair follicles in addition to epidermis and dermis.

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E. Skin grafts

Consist of tissue that has been completely separated from its blood supply before being transplanted to another area of the body.

1. Split-thickness skin grafts (STSG) include the epidermis and a partial thickness of dermis
2. Full-thickness skin grafts (FTSG) include the epidermis and a full thickness of dermis.
3. Composite grafts consist of epidermis, full-thickness dermis, and variable amounts of subcutaneous tissue, cartilage, muscle, and/or hair follicles.

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